

Volume VI Issue 46  
September 2016

# POSTSCRIPTS

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- AMWA's "Engage" and the Art of Medical Writing
- Corporate Slanguage
- Thinking is not Writing
- Mixed-bag of Grammar Ingredients

Official publication of the American Medical Writers Association Pacific Southwest Chapter



## POSTSCRIPTS

### AIMS AND SCOPE

*Postscripts* is the official publication of American Medical Writers Association (AMWA) Pacific Southwest chapter. It publishes news, notices, job postings, and articles of interest in all areas of medical and scientific writing and communications. The scope covers clinical and regulatory writing, scientific writing, publication planning, continuing medical education (CME) and physician/patient education, social media, current regulations, ethical issues, medical writing training and certification, and good writing techniques.

### MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of *Postscripts* is to facilitate the professional development of medical writers and serve as a tool to advance networking and mentoring opportunities among all members. Towards this mission, *Postscripts* publishes significant advances in issues, regulations and practice of medical writing and communications; skills and language; summaries and reports of meetings and symposia; and book and journal summaries. Additionally, to promote career and networking needs of the members, *Postscripts* includes news and event notices covering AMWA Pacific Southwest Chapter activities.

**SUBSCRIPTION:** *Postscripts* is published monthly except in January and July. The magazine is available as an open access publication and is currently distributed online only.

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR CONTRIBUTORS:** We consider articles on any topic of interest to our membership. It is helpful to look at the past December issues for year-end tables of contents, and to browse past issues for style and type of articles published. We welcome contributions from AMWA members. Non-member contributions are generally by invitation by the Editor or any member of the Chapter's Board. Detailed instructions are provided in the December 2015 issue, *Postscripts* 2015;5(39):204.

**ADVERTISING:** *Postscripts* is an advertising-free magazine. However, articles describing products and services relevant to medical writers, editors and communicators may be considered or solicited. As a service to our members, they may submit advertisements for their services or products for free. Please contact the Editor.

### WEBSITES:

Chapter website: <http://www.amwa-pacsw.org>  
AMWA website: <http://www.amwa.org>  
*Postscripts*: <http://issuu.com/postscripts>

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**Design and typesetting** by Ajay Malik.

### EDITOR

Ajay K Malik, PhD  
[ajay@amwa-pacsw.org](mailto:ajay@amwa-pacsw.org)

### EDITOR-AT-LARGE

Susan Vintilla-Friedman, MWC  
[president@amwa-pacsw.org](mailto:president@amwa-pacsw.org)

### AMWA Pacific Southwest Chapter Leadership —

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[president@amwa-pacsw.org](mailto:president@amwa-pacsw.org)

#### Immediate Past President

Donna Simcoe, MS, MS, MBA, CMPPP  
[past-president@amwa-pacsw.org](mailto:past-president@amwa-pacsw.org)

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[secretary@amwa-pacsw.org](mailto:secretary@amwa-pacsw.org)

#### Arizona Liaison

Amy Van Gels, DVM  
[AZliaison@amwa-pacsw.org](mailto:AZliaison@amwa-pacsw.org)

#### Membership Coordinator

Gail Flores, PhD  
[member-coordinator@amwa-pacsw.org](mailto:member-coordinator@amwa-pacsw.org)

#### Employment Coordinator

Sharyn Batey, PhD  
[employment-coordinator@amwa-pacsw.org](mailto:employment-coordinator@amwa-pacsw.org)

#### Outreach Coordinator

Asoka Banno, PhD  
[outreach-coordinator@amwa-pacsw.org](mailto:outreach-coordinator@amwa-pacsw.org)

#### Website Coordinator

Laura J Cobb, PhD  
[website-coordinator@amwa-pacsw.org](mailto:website-coordinator@amwa-pacsw.org)

#### Newsletter Editor

Ajay K Malik, PhD  
[ajay@amwa-pacsw.org](mailto:ajay@amwa-pacsw.org)

#### AMWA Pacific Southwest Conference Chairs

Jacqueline A Dyck-Jones, PhD, MSc  
Jennifer Grodberg, PhD, RAC

#### Outreach Coordinator for Thousand Oaks and Northern Los Angeles

Garima Chaudhry, PhD  
[gchaudhr@usc.edu](mailto:gchaudhr@usc.edu)

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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## COVER:

Nantucket Harbor, Cape Cod. Picture kindly provided by Sharon Karen. 2016.



## From the President's Desk

It's hard to think of a better city for a conference than Denver, Colorado in early October. Denver is now the fastest-growing major city in the US, and it presents tourists with an impressive selection of entertaining options ranging from day trips to the Rocky Mountains to exploring craft breweries in town. The weather is typically in the mid sixties and sunny this time of year, so we hope you get to look around a bit if you are planning to join us at the AMWA national meeting (now known as the Medical Writing and Communication Conference) from October 5 through 8 at the Sheraton Denver Downtown Hotel. Our annual chapter dinner is scheduled for Friday, October 7 at 6:45 pm at Maggiano's Little Italy, and you will soon be receiving an email invitation with registration information specifically for the chapter dinner. Hope to see you there and catch up!

We are moving forward with our mentorship program, and are developing an introductory webinar for mentors and mentees tentatively scheduled for December. If you would like to participate, please contact me at [president@amwa-pacsw.org](mailto:president@amwa-pacsw.org); we'd love to hear about you and your interests. We're also hoping to have a presentation on mentorship next year for the general chapter membership and others who are interested.

Finally, although it's only September, we are already looking forward to planning chapter events for 2017. If you have any ideas for events, presentation topics, or speakers you would like to hear (or if you would like to be a presenter yourself!), please do contact me at the email address shown above. Besides the classic topics such as writing skills, publication and regulatory writing issues, and career development, we are open to new ideas and modes of presentation. Webinars seem to be very popular for educational presentations, and a good way to reach a wider geographical audience, and informal local events such as happy hours are great for socializing and networking. We'd love to hear if you have any other ideas!

Susan

Susan Vintilla-Friedman, MWC  
President, AMWA Pacific Southwest Chapter





## AMWA's Engage Coffee Shop Brews the Act & the Art of Medical Writing

*Engage* is medical writers' virtual coffee shop,<sup>1</sup> which has recently become a popular hangout for AMWA members. By some unofficial accounts, three-fourths of the AMWA membership has visited this virtual hangout since *Engage* was launched in February early this year. While most visitors appear to eavesdrop, there are quite a few who stir up lively conversations that pull in many visitors. Just by hanging out in this "unique and privileged" virtual space, it is possible to pick up lots of new information.

One question that has been appearing in this forum every few weeks in one form or another (mostly from new members who discover this coffee shop) asks "How do I become a medical writer" or "What do I need to do to switch from my last chosen career path (bench scientist, nursing, pharmacy, etc) to the new and exciting path of 'writing' and 'sharing' knowledge?" There are no boilerplate answers to these questions, but there are many suggestions (posted in response), making the *Engage* conversation lively and informative. In essence, it boils down to "the act of writing."

The process of writing can be easy, and yet can be quite *difficult* if one sees the expression "writer's block" float by and believes in it; difficult if one chronically suffers from what Jonathan Safran Foer said—"Jonathan's block," a block unique to each writer.<sup>2</sup>

Jonathan Foer, an author of three best-selling novels, writing for *The Guardian* described how [his] "Jonathan block" influences his act of writing as follows:

"Each [of my novels] has been the result of its own esoteric, inefficient and frustrating process, each a genuine surprise. I have yet to write the book I planned to write, yet to write in the period of time I imagined the book would take, yet to sustain one way of working through an entire book. I try lots."<sup>2</sup>

I can repeat Jonathan's words every month when I try to craft the editor's column for *Postscripts*. Yes, I too stare at "Ajay's block" every month, and just like Jonathan, I also "try lots."

This brings me back to the *Engage* coffee shop. The comments to the aspiring medical writers' questions run the gamut: get your skills in order; become aware of your grammar, your commas; know the



difference between jargon and cliché, and how to avoid them (ie, substitute these ornaments with professional language); and so on. Much of this advice is about a learned behavior, and the skills evolve over time—so, the best advice is: Be persistent. There is help. On page 143, Dikran Toroser summarizes grammar basics from the medical writers' bible "AMA Manual of Style," and on page 140, Rebecca Anderson in her article "Corporate Slanguage" shows how medical writers must guard against slang (and hyperbole) creeping into their work.

One difference between aspiring and professional (experienced) medical writers is that the latter "know their commas". Commas, properly sprinkled, bring out the flavor and essence of a sentence.

"The tiniest coffee shops, with the most limited of menus, would, with seemingly little effort deliver delicious and creative food," writes Alex Hely-Hutchinson in *Porridge Reinvented*.<sup>3</sup>

Another place to turn for practical advice is AMWA's annual meeting "Medical Writing & Communication Conference," which is just around the corner and will be held this October in Denver. There will be workshops and open sessions on grammar, sentence structure, and paragraph building at this meeting. There will also be a full-day "Writing Clinic" by Hope Lafferty, AM, ELS, at the meeting (see page 142).

Medical writing is a "specialized form of writing," so there is no substitute to knowing the subject matter. If a medical writer is developing publications, they should know their IMRADs, GPPs, and ICMJEs; if they are writing clinical and regulatory documents, they should know their clinical protocol guidelines, CSRs, safety narratives, TFLs, and eCTD modules; if they are working with the medical communication or marketing departments of their company, they should know relevant FDA guidelines on promotional materials. One place to get started on all of these myriad topics without leaving the building is an AMWA conference—a one-stop shop!

When not in *Engage* or at the AMWA meeting, it is instructive to look at the advice from Hope Lafferty: Read more in the genre you intend to write (*Postscripts*, May 2016, page 72), and make a habit of reading engaging American prose (*Postscripts*, Aug 2016, page 116). Giving the example of *The New Yorker*, she said: “*The New Yorker* not only has many great articles on science and medicine, but that it’s also a way to see how Americans use language—sentence structure, vocabulary, imagery—in a way that scientific journals just can’t.”

Medical writing also differs from creative writing—that includes writing fiction as Jonathan Foer does—in that it often has the benefit of a structural framework, and is thus less impacted by “Jonathan block.” Medical writers often have the help of templates, the support of guidelines, and the directive of standard operating procedures to steer the writer towards a defined goal. However, creating compelling arguments on paper *still* requires the universal skills of grammar, sentence structure, and rhetorical arguments, particularly logos.

In the end, medical writers have more in common with speechwriters: Michael Dobbs, the creator of novels that became the political TV drama *House of Cards*, when asked how best speechwriters approach writing great speeches, said:

“[W]rite the peroration first. . . The peroration is a ‘basic building-block.’ You’ve got to know where you want to finish up. A great speech will take people from A to B. And in order to get from A to B you might choose many different ways of getting there, but you need to know where it is you’re going to end up.”<sup>4</sup>

Michael Dobbs’ words could easily reflect what medical writers do. The tools that will help us get from A to B are what Dikran, Rebecca and Hope point out to in this and previous issues of *Postscripts*, and what you will hear in October at the AMWA conference in Denver. So, be there!

### Sources and Notes:

1. Engage is AMWA member-only discussion forum. It can be accessed via [engage.amwa.org](http://engage.amwa.org)
2. Jonathan Safran Foer. I don’t have writer’s block, but am a chronic sufferer of “Jonathan block.” *The Guardian*. Aug 27, 2016. Available at: [www.theguardian.com/books/2016/aug/27/my-writing-day-jonathan-safran-foer](http://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/aug/27/my-writing-day-jonathan-safran-foer)
3. Alex Hely-Hutchinson. Porridge Reinvented. *Financial Times*. Aug 26, 2016. Available at: [www.ft.com/cms/s/0/39b862a8-6a4c-11e6-ae5b-a7cc5dd5a28c.html](http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/39b862a8-6a4c-11e6-ae5b-a7cc5dd5a28c.html)
4. Sam Leith. Secrets of speechwriting from the House of Cards creator. *Financial Times*. July 4, 2016. Available at: [www.ft.com/cms/s/0/1c728c58-3eb6-11e6-8716-a4a71e8140b0.html](http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/1c728c58-3eb6-11e6-8716-a4a71e8140b0.html)
5. Abbreviations used: CSR: clinical study report; GPP: good publication practices; ICMJE: International Committee of Medical Journal Editors; IMRAD: introduction, methods, results, and discussion; TFLs: tables, figures and listings (generally outputs using SAS software).





## Corporate Slanguage

By Rebecca J Anderson, PhD, AMWA Pacific Southwest Chapter Member

As medical writers, we work in two worlds: business and science—and from a communication standpoint, it often feels like business *versus* science. Both worlds use shorthand terminology as a convenience, but there's a big difference: whereas scientific jargon is precise and unambiguous, business jargon is intentionally murky.

Business professionals use a \$25 word to cloak a 10-cent concept. And by “cloak,” I mean that the speaker hopes to (a) sound impressive, (b) make his listeners feel less informed, and (c) hide the fact that he really doesn't know what he's talking about. (Remind you of anyone?)

On the other hand, scientists are disciplined in their use of language. For example, they use “significant” only in the context of its statistical meaning. As medical writers, we've learned to communicate their research precisely. We take great pains to select the right word to express what they did and what they found.

But when it comes to our business-oriented colleagues, we must accept a different vocabulary. Some examples that you may recognize (but cannot define) are: pain points, key wins, incentivize, monetize, mindshare, granularity, scalability, ideate, and value proposition.

Business professionals are metrics-driven, solutions-oriented, and results-centric. We let them raise up, drill down, and circle back. We curiously watch while they optimize matrices, facilitate methodologies, and deploy high-level efficiencies.

And when they use “merchandise,” “whiteboard,” and “leverage” as verbs, all we can do is sigh and grit our teeth beneath a forced smile. (When did leverage replace utilize? And when did utilize replace use, for that matter?)

If the financial meltdown didn't teach us anything else, it showed just how dangerous this “slanguage” can be: credit default swaps, collateralized debt obligations, and structured asset-backed securities were just bombastic business balderdash. No one knew what those invented terms meant, including the people who invented them.

Well, as a matter of course (and survival) during our workday, we've learned to shuttle seamlessly between these two worlds without a second thought. (I have to admit that if it weren't for action items and deliverables, I wouldn't know what to do when I leave some team meetings.)

After years of observation (I was trained as a scientist, so I know how to observe), I think I've figured out why business and scientific communications have diverged. To write clearly, you have to think clearly. And that takes discipline. Business professionals avoid clarity because it makes them accountable. That's scary. They only care about reaching the finish line first—no matter what.

Unfortunately, scientists can't fudge it. Their reputations depend not only on beating everyone else to the finish line but also ensuring that everyone else can confirm what they did. Being “outed” for irreproducible—or worse, fraudulent—work is a career-killer.

As writers, we must satisfy both sides, because a business officer signs the paycheck, and a journal editor (or FDA official) holds the veto pen. As you know, great battles are fought over word choices—while rushing to cross that finish line.

Insider “slanguage” is ok, as long as it stays inside. For communications destined for the outside world (including emails and tweets!), our job is to make the opaque transparent and to boil the bewildering down to the simple and straightforward. We create products characterized by precisely defined terms, well-constructed sentences, and orderly sub-sections as defined by the AMA style guide, the ICH, or whoever guards the publication gate.

It may be the last thing our business boss wants, but we know it's what regulatory officials and journal editors expect. Good luck crossing that finish line.

REBECCA J ANDERSON, PhD, is a freelance medical writer and the author of two books, *Nevirapine and the Quest to End Pediatric AIDS* and *Career Opportunities in Clinical Drug Research*. Prior to medical writing, Dr. Anderson managed research and development projects for twenty-five years in the pharmaceutical/biotech industry. She holds a PhD in pharmacology from Georgetown University. She lives in Southern California, and when she is not writing, she absorbs the sights and sounds of the West Coast's rich culture and heritage. She can be reached at [rebeccanderson@msn.com](mailto:rebeccanderson@msn.com).



# Praxis

By Hope J Lafferty, AM, ELS, AMWA Southwest Chapter Member

## Thinking Is Not Writing

The more I teach, the more I'm fascinated with nonnative English speakers. In recent seminars, I've met some young investigators whose writing was clear enough that I was surprised to learn that they did not grow up speaking American English. During our coaching sessions, we discussed the few issues that I found in their writing samples and attributed these back to how their earliest understanding of language shaped both their thinking and their writing.

One of my clients came to the United States from China when he was in graduate school. Even though his full name was Chinese, his writing sample convinced me that he might have been raised in Chicago. His work was well organized, used short and clear sentences, and employed contemporary medical English terms. The single biggest issue was that he didn't use punctuation, particularly commas to separate introductory phrases from the rest of the sentence.

Not knowing how to use commas is fairly common with my clients, so this client's lack of comma use wasn't striking. However, once I knew that he didn't grow up speaking or reading American English, a lightbulb went on. We discussed how he wrote and he stated that he writes first in Chinese and then translates into English.

As I've mentioned before (see August's column "Tapping Into Language"), the structure of Asian languages differs substantially from English—and Chinese doesn't use punctuation to construct the language. Or to construct thought. It's obvious from his writing that my client's thinking in Chinese is both sound and scientific, but his lack of punctuation belies his otherwise fluent writing in English.

Another client came to the United States from Iran when she was in ninth grade and grew up speaking a few Middle Eastern languages, with Persian as her first and main language. Comma use was not her issue. To the contrary, her comma use was impeccable. The structure of her sentences, in fact,

required a lot of comma use because of the many modifiers, explanations, and interruptions in thought. Although her sentences carried sound logic, they ran long and all the modifiers caused a loss of momentum when reading.

Because I've never met anyone who spoke Persian, we discussed the structure of the language. She explained that sentences typically lead with the verb, much like Spanish, where you get a lot of information from a single word and modify from there. Another lightbulb went on. Even though she did not translate her work from Persian, her writing in English reflected how she learned to think about language.

For native English speakers, I spend a lot of time helping them change the way they approach their writing, which has to do with how they think. For nonnative English speakers, it's less about changing how they think. Nothing's wrong with how these high-performing individuals think. The challenge becomes how to understand and execute written English when its structure is foreign to not just one's speech but also one's earliest cognition.



HOPE J LAFFERTY, AM, ELS, has run her writing and training consultancy, Hope Lafferty Communications, since 2009. Over her career, she has worked as a writer in radio, high tech, engineering, instructional design, and medical research. Hope completed certificates in medical writing and editing from AMWA and the University of Chicago and in training from the Association for Talent Development. She serves as AMWA Annual Conference Chair-Elect and President-Elect of the Board of Editors in the Life Sciences (BELS). When she's not webcasting, podcasting, or otherwise modeling good writing practice, she takes road trips with her musician husband and comedian dog. Connect with Hope at [hope@hopelafferty.com](mailto:hope@hopelafferty.com).



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# AMA-zing Style — The AMA Manual of Style Column

By Dikran Toroser, PhD, CMPP, Amgen Inc., Thousand Oaks, Calif.

## Mixed-bag of Grammar Ingredients—Nouns, Verbs, Gerunds, Clichés and Euphemisms

*The difference between the almost-right word and the right word is really a large matter—it's the difference between the lightning bug and the lightning.*

Mark Twain

One of the most fundamental requirements in medical writing is the clear understanding of grammar—the basic tool in good writing. As well as focusing on the major elements of grammar, the AMA Manual of Style also contains information on clichés, euphemisms, and colloquialisms.

**Nouns.** Nouns (words that name a person, place, thing, or idea) may serve as subjects or objects.

**Modifiers (Noun Strings).** Although nouns can be used as modifiers, overuse of noun modifiers can lead to a lack of clarity. With the use of nouns as verbs, the process of linguistic change is inevitable, and grammatical rigor must be tempered by judgment and common sense.

Avoid	Preferred
elderly over-the-counter drug users	elderly users of over-the-counter drugs
depression episode	depressive episode, episode of depression

Noun modifiers should be used with caution; for the sake of clarity, no more than 2 polysyllabic noun modifiers per noun should be used. However, long noun strings are sometimes difficult to avoid.

community hospital program  
physician provider organization

If there is a possibility of ambiguity, hyphens may be added for clarity.

large-vessel dissection

**Modifying Gerunds.** When a noun or pronoun precedes a gerund (a verb form ending in -ing that is used as a noun), the noun or pronoun is possessive.

The toxicity of the drug was not a factor in the patient's dying so suddenly  
The award recognized the researcher's planning as well as his performance

**Verbs.** Verbs express an action, an occurrence, or a mode of being.

**Voice.** In the active voice, the subject does the acting; in the passive voice, the subject is acted on. In general, authors should use the active voice.



*Passive:* Data were collected from 5000 patients by physicians.  
*Active (better):* Physicians collected data from 5000 patients.

**Idioms, Colloquialisms, and Slang.** Some language is best avoided in material written for a professional or academic audience. Idioms are fixed expressions that cannot be understood literally (*kick the bucket, on a roll, put up with, pay attention*). In addition, some may have multiple meanings that can be understood only in context (*pass out, stand for*). Idioms are not governed by any rules and each stands on its own. Be wary of using idioms, particularly for audiences that include readers whose first language is not English.

Colloquialisms (or casualisms) are characteristic of informal, casual communication (*ain't, anyways, cold turkey, flat line, OK, shell-shocked, tax hike*). Avoid these except in special situations, such as "flavorful" prose or direct quotations. *My sense is that part of the reason why Claude is able to survive is denial. He just says, flat out, "This ain't happening."*

Slang includes informal terms whose meanings are not readily understood by all speakers of a language. Sometimes they are newly coined (*hick, rinky-dink, FAQ*) and sometimes they are created by applying new meanings to existing words (*bad, cool, awesome, random, killer*).

**Jargon.** Technical terminology specific to various disciplines is considered jargon and should be avoided.

**Euphemisms.** Euphemisms (from the Greek *eu*, "good," and *pheme*, "voice") are indirect terms used to express something unpleasant. Although such language is often necessary in social situations ("He passed away."), directness is better in scientific writing ("The patient died.").

**Clichés.** Clichés are worn-out expressions (*sleep like a log, dead as a doornail, first and foremost, crystal clear*). At one time they were clever metaphors, but overuse has left them lifeless, unable to conjure in the reader's mind the original image. Avoid clichés like the plague.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Thanks are due to Ajay Malik, PhD, for editorial input.

Also see pages 315 and 332 of the AMA Manual of Style 10<sup>th</sup> edition.

DIKRAN TOROSER, PhD, CMPP, a member of the AMWA Pacific Southwest chapter, has been a regular contributor to the *Postscripts* magazine since 2012. He developed the monthly AMA-zing Style column which covers topics from the AMA Manual of Style, and has also written on publication-related topics in these pages. Dikran is currently a Senior Medical Writing Manager at Amgen Inc. in Thousand Oaks, California. He earned his PhD in Biochemistry from Newcastle University (UK), and did his postdoctoral training in biochemical genetics at the John Innes Center of the Cambridge Laboratory (Norwich, UK) and in molecular biology with the USDA. Prior to Amgen, Dikran was on the faculty (research) at the School of Pharmacy at the University of Southern California. He can be reached at [dtoroser@amgen.com](mailto:dtoroser@amgen.com).



# AMWA Pacific Southwest Chapter Warmly Welcomes Our New Members

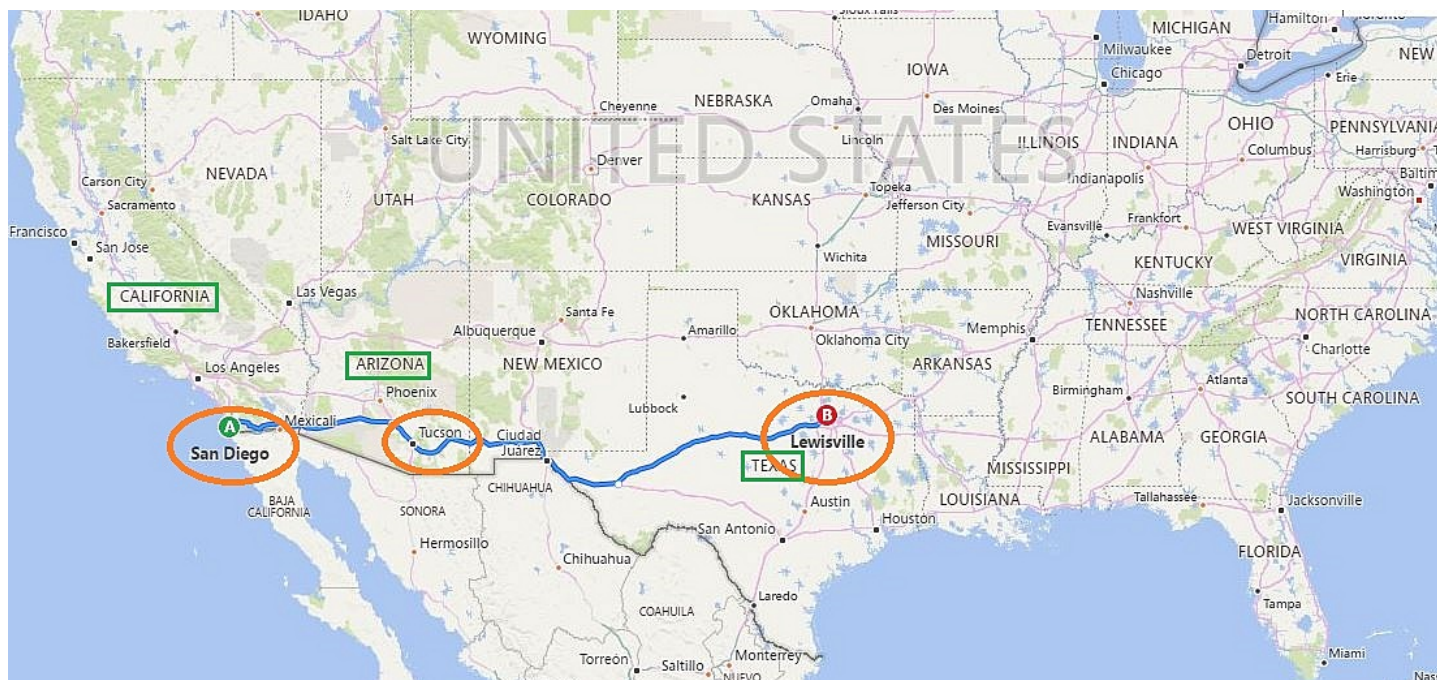
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*Denise McCoy - Lewisville, TX*

*Hemant Deshmukh - San Diego*

*Katie Barry - San Diego*

*Tammy Bose - Tucson, AZ*



List courtesy of Gail Flores, PhD, AMWA Pacific Southwest Chapter membership coordinator.

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# Medical Writing Open Positions

Compiled By: **Sharyn Batey, PharmD, MSPH**

Employment Coordinator, AMWA Pacific Southwest Chapter

## **Scientific Writer**

Ambry Genetics, Aliso Viejo, CA

<http://ambry.hrmdirect.com/employment/view.php?req=423138&jbsrc=1014>

## **Senior Copy Writer, Marketing**

Metagenics, Aliso Viejo, CA

<https://jobs-metagenics.icims.com/jobs/2743/senior-copy-writer%2c-marketing/job?mode=job&iis=Indeed&iisn=Indeed.com>

## **Director, Medical Writer**

Avanir Pharmaceuticals, Inc., Aliso Viejo, CA

[https://avanir.wd1.myworkdayjobs.com/en-US/AvanirJobs/job/Aliso-Viejo-CA/Director--Medical-Writer\\_R1028-1?source=indeed.com](https://avanir.wd1.myworkdayjobs.com/en-US/AvanirJobs/job/Aliso-Viejo-CA/Director--Medical-Writer_R1028-1?source=indeed.com)

## **Medical Writer – Promotional Activities**

Arbor Scientia, Carlsbad, CA

<http://jobview.monster.com/v2/job/View?JobID=162248413&MESCOID=2700440001001&jobPosition=1>

## **Medical Writer – Pharmaceutical**

Brandkarma, Irvine, CA

<http://careers.brandkarma.org/medical-writer.html>

## **Specialist, Medical Writing – Transcatheter Heart Valve**

Edwards Lifesciences, Irvine, CA

[https://edwards.taleo.net/careersection/edwards\\_external\\_cs/jobdetail.ftl?job=008772&src=JB-10046](https://edwards.taleo.net/careersection/edwards_external_cs/jobdetail.ftl?job=008772&src=JB-10046)

## **Director, Medical Writing**

Atara Biotherapeutics, Los Angeles, CA

<http://app.jobvite.com/CompanyJobs/Careers.aspx?k=Job&c=qk0aVfw9&j=o7CS1fwm&s=Indeed>

## **Scientific Writer I**

Public Health Institute, Monrovia, CA

<https://www.phi.jobs/postings/3760>

## **Director, Medical and Regulatory Writing**

Acadia Pharmaceuticals Inc., San Diego, CA

<http://job-openings.monster.com/monster/dabeaf8e-2f59-447b-aad5-bdf13097b757?mescoId=1100047001001&jobPosition=21>

## **Principal Medical Writer**

Halozyme, San Diego, CA

[https://halozyme.wd1.myworkdayjobs.com/en-US/halozymecareers/job/San-Diego/Principal-Medical-Writer\\_R0000193-3](https://halozyme.wd1.myworkdayjobs.com/en-US/halozymecareers/job/San-Diego/Principal-Medical-Writer_R0000193-3)

## **Senior Technical Writer**

Illumina, Inc., San Diego, CA

<https://sjobs.brassring.com/TGWEbHost/jobdetails.aspx?jobId=2540697&PartnerId=25666&SiteId=5503&codes=INDD>

## **Senior Medical Writer**

Intercept Pharmaceuticals, San Diego, CA

<http://interceptpharma.submit4jobs.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=85416.viewjobdetail&CID=85416&JID=227863&source=Indeed>



**Senior Medical Writer (Medical Communications)**

Liberty Jobs recruiting for undisclosed company in San Diego, CA

<http://job-openings.monster.com/monster/12bcfad0-d23b-4b0e-b3d9-5a0bb79b2c20?mescoId=2700440001001&jobPosition=9>

**Associate Director / Director Medical Writing (Publications)**

Intercept Pharmaceuticals San Diego, CA

<http://interceptpharma.submit4jobs.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=85416.viewjobdetail&CID=85416&JID=226364&source=Indeed>

**Science / Medical Proofreader (Marketing)**

International Programming & Systems Inc., San Diego, CA

[https://ipsamerica.com/Jobs/Info.aspx?id=4165i&id2=6&utm\\_source=Indeed&utm\\_medium=organic&utm\\_campaign=Indeed](https://ipsamerica.com/Jobs/Info.aspx?id=4165i&id2=6&utm_source=Indeed&utm_medium=organic&utm_campaign=Indeed)

**Medical Writer (Cardiology)**

ScienceMedia, San Diego, CA

<http://www.indeed.com/cmp/ScienceMedia/jobs/Medical-Writer-296ff39bd1412291>

**Medical Writer (Oncology)**

ScienceMedia, San Diego, CA

<http://www.indeed.com/cmp/ScienceMedia/jobs/Medical-Writer-c26cec8071bd971d?q=medical+writer>

**Senior Medical Writer**

Precision for Medicine, Inc, Santa Ana, CA

<http://chp.tbe.taleo.net/chp01/ats/careers/requisition.jsp?org=PRECISIONFORMEDICINE&cws=39&rid=567&source=Indeed.com>

**Senior Manager/ Associate Director, Publications**

Kite Pharma, Inc., Santa Monica, CA

<https://careers.jobscore.com/careers/kitepharma/jobs/senior-manager-associate-director-publications-cNg9ksmM0r5OX9eMg-44q7>

**Regulatory Writing Manager**

Amgen, Inc, Thousand Oak, CA

<http://www.biospace.com/jobs/job-listing/regulatory-writing-manager-360111>

**Medical Writing Manager**

Amgen, Inc, Thousand Oaks, CA

<http://careers.amgen.com/job-en/6621166/med-writing-manager-thousand-oaks-ca/?aasi=2>

**Senior Medical Writer - Remote**

MMS Holdings Inc, Thousand Oaks, CA

[http://mmsholdingsinc.applytojob.com/apply/job\\_20160324195943\\_2AWKLUK7SF9W17VR/Senior-Medical-Writer-Remote?source=INDE](http://mmsholdingsinc.applytojob.com/apply/job_20160324195943_2AWKLUK7SF9W17VR/Senior-Medical-Writer-Remote?source=INDE)

**Senior Medical Writer, Regulatory Writing - Regional**

INC, North America – US Regional

<https://incresearch.taleo.net/careersection/ex/jobdetail.ftl?job=16003893&src=JB-10480>

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If you want to share job leads with the members of the Pacific Southwest Chapter, please contact Sharyn at [employment-coordinator@amwa-pacsw.org](mailto:employment-coordinator@amwa-pacsw.org).

# Upcoming Chapter Events

Sep 02   Sep 10   Oct 07   Oct 14   Nov 08   Dec 01

## **AMWA Pacific Southwest Chapter Lunch (Monthly) Teleconference** **Occurs First Friday of the month, 12:00-1:00 PM Pacific time**

Hosted by Donna Simcoe, Past President of the Chapter

Dial in number: 706-913-1155

Participant code: 0204157# (or from your iPhone: 706-913-1155,0204157#)

Free. Open to members and non-members.

- **Friday, September 2:** We will discuss how to make the most of the 2016 AMWA Medical Writing & Communication Conference in Denver, Colorado, October 5-8. Details to come.
- **Friday, October 14:** Recap of the 2016 AMWA Medical Writing & Communication Conference.

## **Saturday, September 10, 2016, 10:00 AM-3:45 PM.**

### **Medical Writers' Toolbox Symposium**

#### **Agenda**

- Options, Templates, and Electronic Markup: A Word Skill Set for Complex Documents – Maggie Norris, BSc, ELS (aka WordWitch™), of Fine Print Publication Services LLC.
- Document management systems and MS Word Templates – Ajay Malik, PhD, of Intercept Pharmaceuticals Inc. and Donna Simcoe, MS, MS, MBA, CMPP, of Simcoe Consultants Inc.
- An Overview of Health Economics and Outcomes Research (HEOR): The Next Great Opportunity for Medical Writers – Julie Gegner, PhD, of Amgen Inc.
- Q & A, Networking

**Location:** Amgen Inc. One Amgen Center Dr, Building 24 Conference Center Auditorium  
Thousand Oaks, CA 91320

**Cost:** Free (courtesy of Amgen, Inc)

**Registration** and additional details coming soon!

- **October 7, 2016.** Chapter Dinner at AMWA National Meeting in Denver

#### **SAVE THE DATES:**

- **November 8, 2016.** Joint meeting between San Diego STC and PacSW AMWA chapter. Location: Hera Hub, Sorrento Mesa, San Diego.
- **December 1, 2016:** Webinar: Mentor and mentee training for participants in PacSW AMWA Mentorship Program



# What's Happening at AMWA National

## **AMWA 2016 Medical Writing & Communication Conference**

Register at [www.amwa.org/conference](http://www.amwa.org/conference)

**New this year** – Workshops will be held before and after the general conference activities. Note: BOD meeting will be on Saturday, so there may be a conflict there, but otherwise workshops do not conflict with general sessions or networking events.

### **CORE Reference**

AMWA partnered with EMWA to create the CORE Reference, a user manual to help medical writers navigate relevant guidelines as they create clinical study report (CSR) content. <http://www.amwa.org/core>

### **AMWA Online Learning**

Our catalog of online learning activities continues to grow with more coming this month! Interactive, self-guided online learning includes:

- The Role of the Regulatory Writer
- Drug Development Essentials: Regulatory Documents for Developing Clinical Studies and Reporting Clinical Data
- Drug Development Essentials: Regulatory Documents for Getting a Drug to Market and Monitoring Safety
- Ten Characteristics of Effective Tables and Graphs
- Harness the Power of EndNote: Manage Your Library's Data

Regulatory Writing Overview package – Jump-start a career in regulatory writing with this three-part online learning activity. Save over 15% by purchasing all three activities as a package. Learn more at [www.amwa.org/regulatory123](http://www.amwa.org/regulatory123).

A Career in Medical Communication: Steps to Success – Designed to answer the most frequently asked questions about becoming a medical writer, this online learning activity will explore what medical communicators do, where they work, and the variety of documents they produce. Explore further at [www.amwa.org/careersteps](http://www.amwa.org/careersteps).

Find these activities, archived recordings of AMWA Live Webinars, Pocket Trainings, and more in AMWA Online Learning at [www.amwa.org/online\\_learning](http://www.amwa.org/online_learning).

### **MWC –**

**Next exam administration, October 6, 2016** in Denver, CO, in conjunction with the Medical Writing & Communication Conference. Application information at: [http://www.amwa.org/mwc\\_apply](http://www.amwa.org/mwc_apply)

### **Essential Skills package**

Purchase all 7 Self-Study Workbooks and earn the AMWA Essential Skills certificate at your own pace. Certificate enrollment is included. [http://www.amwa.org/es\\_express](http://www.amwa.org/es_express)

Package sale price: \$950 member/\$1,250 nonmember  
ES Express Package offers over 25% in savings!

## AMWA WEBINARS:

**Unlock the Secrets to Freelance Success: Getting the Clients You Deserve**  
September 8, 2016 | 1:00 PM -2:00 PM ET

**Clinical Trial Transparency: What you need to know about European Medicines Agency Policy 0070**  
September 14, 2016 | 1:00 PM -2:00 PM ET

**When a Guide Becomes a Rule: The Food and Drug Administration's Rulemaking Authority and its Impact on Submissions Documents**  
October 19, 2016 | 1:00 PM -2:00 PM ET

Visit the AMWA Event Calendar ([http://www.amwa.org/calendar\\_list.asp](http://www.amwa.org/calendar_list.asp)) for a full list of upcoming events, and registration details. Most webinars are \$55 for members and \$95 for non-members.

## AMWA 2016 Medical Writing & Communication Conference. October 5-8. Denver

### Trends and Opportunities for Medical Communicators

By Hope J. Lafferty, MA, ELS / 2016 Annual Conference Administrator-Elect

AMWA J. 2016. Published ahead-of-print (online)

<http://www.amwa.org/files/Journal/ConferencePreviewArticle.pdf>



### Trends and Opportunities in Denver

By Hope J. Lafferty, MA, ELS / 2016 Annual Conference Administrator-Elect

Published online ahead of print, August 2016.

Join us in the Mile-High City for the 2016 AMWA conference. Our motto for this year promises "trends and opportunities for medical communicators," so let's break that down.

#### Trends

**Jargon, Social Media, and Career.** For starters, the presenters at our general sessions will offer a range of perspectives on medical communications. We open the conference with the Alvarez Award Address (2:00 PM, October 6) by Rosanne Khamis, chief news editor of *Nature Medicine*. Ms. Khamis will discuss new findings on the use of jargon in the medical literature. For the McGovern Award Address (8:30 AM, October 8), Dr. Kevin Pho, physician and social media thought leader, will discuss how social media changes the patient-provider relationship. Finally, at the Sablack Luncheon (12:30 PM, October 8), AMWA's own Flo Witte, PhD, ELS, will accept the Swenberg Award and discuss the trends and opportunities she's experienced over her career as a medical writer and editor.

**Dossiers, China, and More Career.** Roundtables are not new to AMWA. But this year, they are included in the conference fee. We're hosting one giant session of 50 roundtables (12:15 PM, October 7) over lunch—and you have to eat lunch. Stay abreast of various trends and topics including *Email Tones in Science and Medical Communication*, *HTA & AMCP Dossiers: Find Out What They Are... Using Document Design to Get Your Message Across*, *Structural Review and the Unfulfilled Promises of Personalized Medicine*, and *Comparisons of Medical Writing in the United States and China*, to name a few. Register today to join the conversations.

**Interviewing, eCTD, and Freelance and Industry Career.** Also included in the price of admission are 50 open educational sessions. Sixty-minute, 90-minute, and 2-hour sessions (4:00 PM, October 6, all day October 7, all morning October 8) will cover

myriad topics including *In-Depth Interview Techniques and Best Practices*, *Create eCTD Compliant Regulatory Documents and Protect Your Professional Reputation*, *Writing Health Content That Shows People How to Conduct an Effective Comment Revision Meeting*, and *Build Your Freelance Business with a Strong Online Presence*. Company representatives will also be sharing hiring and medical writing management practices. Here's the best news: you don't have to preregister to attend.

**Scholars Among Us.** Those who study how medical communicators work elevate the field for all of us. Lucky for AMWA, 9 groups of investigators are sharing their findings or lessons learned in poster form. Stop by the Resource Hall (8:00 AM, October 7) and visit with the emerging thought leaders within our ranks.

**Preconference Intensives.** For the first time, AMWA is offering a full-day Writing Clinic (9:00 AM, October 5) for scientists transitioning from bench to laptop and for editors who don't consider themselves writers. If you have never taken a writing class, you are not alone. This clinic compresses a full semester of writing exercises into a fun and no-pressure environment. Another opportunity on Wednesday is One-on-One Mentoring: Taxonomic Analysis and Revision of Medical Writing, with individual meetings and emailed revisions of writing samples.

#### Opportunities

**Testing, Testing.** What better way to prove your prowess as a medical writer than by proving your prowess as a medical writer? At the AMWA conference each year, you have an opportunity to take AMWA's very own Medical Writer Certification (MWC) exam. If you're an editor, you can prove your prowess as an editor by taking the certification exam from the Board of Editors in the Life Sciences (BELS) at the AMWA

Keep pace with the field. Develop your skills. Build your network.  
**Look out, Denver: AMWA's coming.**



conference too. If you're both a writer and an editor, though, you will have to choose. Both exams are offered around the same time (October 6 in the morning). Consider this a good thing. The overachievers in our group might opt to take these rigorous exams back-to-back, and I don't think AMWA carries enough insurance to cover the fall-out. Deadlines for applying to take the test are well before the conference, however, so if you have missed this year's deadlines (August 31 for MWC, September 14 for BELS), keep an eye out for future opportunities.

**Friends and Followers.** A new staple for AMWA is Speed Networking. By popular demand, we're offering two sessions this year (4:00 PM, October 6, 11:00 AM, October 7). You don't have to sign up in advance, but make sure you show up early. These sessions are always packed and space is limited.

**High Tea with Exhibitors.** Maybe it's the altitude, maybe I'm koshone, but who cares about coffee when you can have high tea? In Denver no less! Stroll around the Resource Hall and visit with the exhibitors (3:00 PM, October 7). Refreshing.

**AMWA Workshops.** Credit workshops are the foundation of the AMWA educational program, but this year the workshops are also an opportunity in themselves. We've scheduled all the credit workshops so they don't compete with any open educational session. So you no longer have to choose between working on your certificate and learning something cool about the field.

**But Wait, There's More**  
So much more. Whether a trend, an opportunity, or something just as delightful, the 2016 AMWA conference is designed for medical communicators at every stage of their careers and across industries.

Many thanks to the Annual Conference Committee members for bringing you this year's program:

Wendi Mikyas, PhD, ELS, CMPP  
2016 Conference Administrator  
MedImmune, Gaithersburg, MD  
Hope Lafferty, MA, ELS  
Conference Administrator-Elect  
Hope Lafferty Communications, Nashville, TN  
Tara Ann Cartwright, PhD  
Medical Writer, Research Triangle Park, NC  
Larry Lynam, MS, SM, RM  
The Lynam Group, Coral Springs, FL  
Joanne Rosenberg, MS, ELS  
Jazz Pharmaceuticals, Philadelphia, PA  
R Michelle Sauer, PhD, ELS  
RuA Editing, LLC, Cypress, TX  
Julie Gelderinos, PhD  
Gelderinos Medical Writing, LLC, Boulder, CO  
Susan Daniels, PhD  
Houston Methodist Hospital, Houston, TX  
Sharmila Natarajan, PhD  
MedImmune, Gaithersburg, MD  
Becky Phillips  
Education Manager, AMWA, Rockville, MD



# Cliché



## OUR THREE-VOLUME NOVEL AT A GLANCE.



**VOL. I.**—She sat apart, a cloud hanging on her fair brow, and her sweet eyes downcast.



He threw himself at her Feet.



And crushing her slender  
Fingers within his—



"Lettuce fly!" he murmured.



She turned a little pale—



And tossing her head in  
the air,



She swept past him,



Flung herself out of the room,  
and disappeared through one  
of the doors.



Quickly recovering himself,



"Foiled!" he cried.



His suit had been declined!



**VOL. III.**—In another second  
he found himself in the street.

Source:  
Wikipedia: Cliché